

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 03339 120404Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 INR-07
CIAE-00 /044 W

-----121740Z 041375 /42

R 111441Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6102
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY ROME

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 3339

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IS, LE, IT
SUBJECT: ITALIAN AMBASSADOR'S IMPRESSIONS OF LEBANESE SITUATION

1.. ITALIAN DCM (DE COURTEN)CAME TO SEE ME MAY 10 TO
DISCUSS LEBANON. HE HAD A REPORT FROM THE ITALIAN
AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS WHO HAD RECENTLY VISITED
SOUTHERN LEBANON.

2. ACCORDING TO THE PORTIONS OF THIS REPORT WHICH
DE COURTEN READ, THE AMBASSADOR WAS CONVINCED THAT THE
PLO HAD A VERY FIRM GRIP ON THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN
LEBANON, SAVE FOR THAT AREA ALONG THE ISRAELI-LEBANESE
FRONTIER CONTROLLED BY THE CHRISTIANS. IT WAS HIS VIEW
THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT HAD NO POWER IN THE SOUTH,
THAT THE SYRIANS WERE NOT PLAYING AN ACTIVE ROLE, AND
THAT ARAFAT HAD SUCCEEDED IN ESTABLISHING PALESTINIAN
CONTROL WITH FREE ACCESS BETWEEN THE SOUTH AND THE
ARQUB. ARAFAT ALSO HAD REPORTEDLY RECEIVED CARTE
BLANCHE FOR OPERATIONS AGAINST ISRAEL. THE AMBASSADOR
CONCLUDED THAT, IN CONSEQUENCE,LEBANON HAD BEEN

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PARTIONED IN FACT.

3. DE COURTEN ASKED WHETHER WE HAD INFORMATION WHICH
WOULD CORROBORATE THAT FROM THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR.
I REPLIED THAT WE HAD NOT TO MY KONWLEDGE, AND THAT I
WAS SURPRISED AT IT. I FELT THAT WE
WOULD HAVE HAD INDICATIONS IF THE PALESTINIANS HAD

ESTABLISHED AS FIRM AND PERMANENT CONTROL AS HE IMPLIED.
DE COURTEN AGREED THAT IF DEVELOPMENTS OF THIS SERIOUS A NATURE
HAD TAKEN PLACE IN CRECENT WEEKS THE ISRAELIS WOULD
PROBABLY HAVE BEEN THE FIRST TO REACT, AND HE ADMITTED
THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO INDICATION FROM THEM ALONG THESE
LINES. NOR, I SAID, HAD THEY EXPRESSED THIS TYPE OF
CONCERN TO US.

4. DE COURTEN SAID THAT THE AMBASSADOR, WHOM HE KNEW,
WAS YOUNG AND INCLINED TO BE IMPULSIVE. HE MAY HAVE
BEEN IMPRESSED BY PLO MEMBERS WITH WHOM HE SPOKE ON HIS
RECENT VISIT. HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER THE AMBASSADOR
HAD SHARED HIS VIEWS WITH EMBASSY DAMASCUS.

5. ACTION: ANY INFORMATION WHICH BEIRUT OR DAMASCUS
COULD SHED ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS REPORT WOULD BE
APPRECIATED.
DUNNIGAN

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NNN

Message Attributes

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